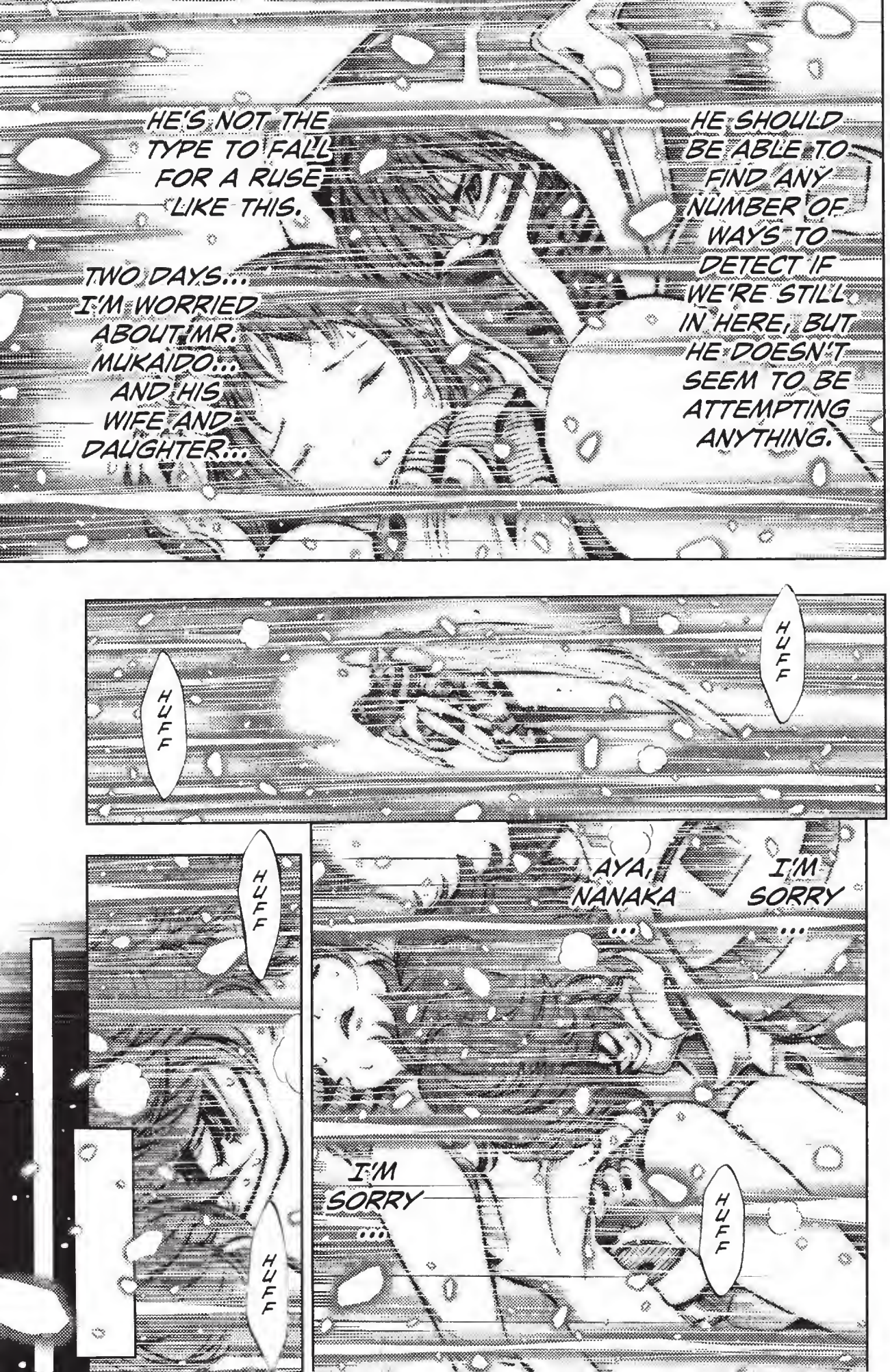
PLATINUM END
— CHAPTER 17 —
The Throbbing of the Heart
STORY BY TSUGUMI OHBA ART BY TAKESHI OBATA

!
KWING
KWING
M... MISTER POLI-MAN!!
KWING
WHAT IS IT ?!
I... I AM MISTER POLIMAN'S SERVANT...
KWING
KWING

I FEEL MY LOVE FOR HER GROWING BY THE MOMENT...
BADUMP
BADUMP
BUT I JUST LOVE HER SO MUCH.
BADUMP
BADUMP
G-G-G-G
G-G-G-G

"MISTER POLIMAN"?! WHAT WAS THAT VOICE...? WHAT HAPPENED?!
!
KWIIIIII
WE'RE COMPLETELY TRAPPED IN HERE. IF SOMETHING'S CHANGING, THAT'S GOOD...
NO... ACTUALLY, THEY HAVE NO REASON TO DO ANYTHING BUT WAIT.
IT'S BEEN NEARLY TWO DAYS SINCE WE PRETENDED TO LEAVE...
SO IF THEY ARE MOVING, IT MUST BE TO FINISH US OFF...


HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO FALL FOR A RUSE LIKE THIS.
HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND ANY NUMBER OF WAYS TO DETECT IF WE'RE STILL IN HERE, BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ATTEMPTING ANYTHING.
TWO DAYS... I'M WORRIED ABOUT MR. MUKAIDO... AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
AYA, NANAKA ...
I'M SORRY ...
I'M SORRY ...

I GET TO DIE SURROUNDED BY MY LOVING FAMILY.
THERE CAN'T BE A BETTER WAY TO GO.
I'M A HAPPY, LUCKY MAN...
WITH MY BEAUTIFUL, CARING WIFE AND MY ADORABLE KID... CAN'T ASK FOR ANYTHING ELSE.
KINDA FEEL LIKE I ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND THAT NOW...
"DON'T YOU DARE GO EVEN A DAY BEFORE I DO," OR SOMETHING...
"YOU CAN'T DIE BEFORE I DO."
WASN'T THERE AN OLD SONG LIKE THIS?

I CAN'T, HUH ...?
YOU CAN'T TALK LIKE THAT.
WILL YOU MAKE ME A PROMISE, NANATO?
DON'T GIVE UP.
I DON'T HAVE LONG EITHER WAY, SO I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN KICK THE SMOKING HABIT NOW.
PROMISE WHAT?
I WANT NANAKA AND OUR NEW BABY ...
I WANT THEM TO SEE.

BADUMP
MIRROR HOUSE
BADUMP
BADUMP
KUTTII
I CAN'T DIE YET!
HUFF!
HUFF!
...TO SEE THEIR DADDY DOING HIS BEST TO STAY ALIVE UNTIL THE VERY END...
THE ONE WAY I CAN'T AFFORD TO DIE... IS IF MY PASSING LEADS TO THE MURDER OF MY FAMILY!!
WHAT IS IT, HAJIME? WHY AREN'T YOU SAYING ANYTHING?
AH!

I TOLD YOU ONLY TO CONTACT ME WHEN THEY STOP OR SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENS.
TOK
TOK
SO WHAT IS IT?
!
MY... MY RE-PORT ...
...IS ...IS THAT ...
HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
I... I AM MISTER POLIMAN'S... SERVANT...
SERVANT!

TWING

...SO... CUUUUTE!!
SHE'S ...
I'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM FALL IN LOVE WITH ME...
AND MAKE HIM THINK THE FEELING'S MUTUAL...
PWIP
PWIP
OH MY...
AH... AAH...

HER DARK, SHINING EYES...
THE PERFECTLY SHAPED BUST, NEITHER TOO SMALL NOR TOO BIG... HER HIPS...
THE SHORT BOBBED HAIR...
THOSE PINK, FULL LIPS...
THE COMBINATION OF HER STRAIGHT-LACED, ALMOST P-PLAIN LOOKS AND THAT WILD COSTUME...
IT'S... IT'S JUST TOO MUCH... OH, MY SWEET CAT-EARED GIRL, I...

TH...
!
THIS IS...
?!
...LOVE...
LOVE ...
I LOVE YOU ...
L...
O...
V...
E...
LOVE ...?

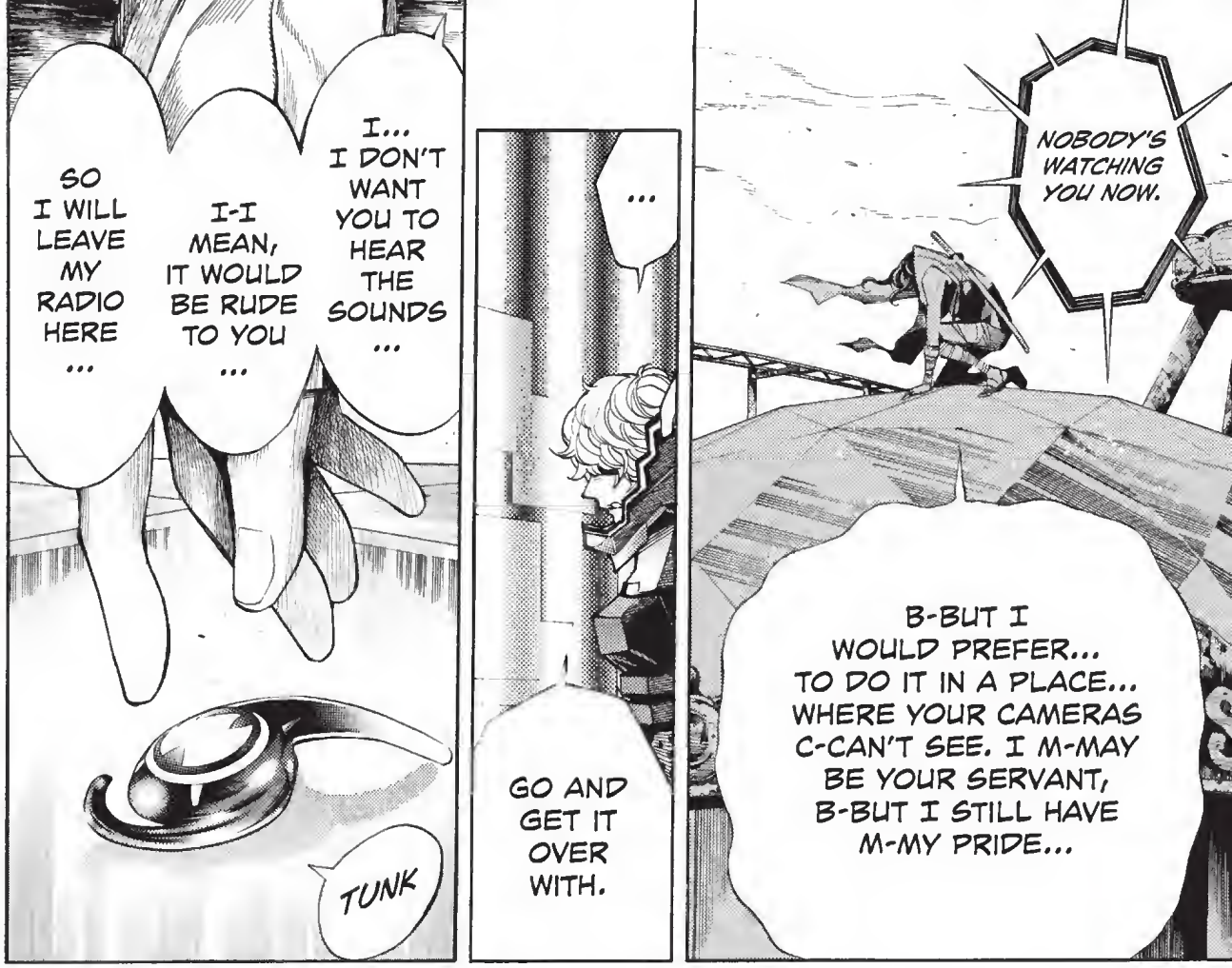
LOVE
.....!!

...FEELING!
WHAT A TREMENDOUS...
A HEART LEAPING INTO FLIGHT...
WHAT A FEELING.
IT SQUEEZES MY CHEST.
THINKING OF HER...
OHHH
MY HEART BEATS MADLY.
...MAKES MY HEART DANCE AND SING.
BADUM
BADUM

MY BIRTH, ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, WAS LEADING UP TO THIS MEETING WITH THIS GIRL.
F-FATHER, MOTHER... TH-THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME INTO THE WORLD.
I... I'M SO HAPPY...
...THAT I WAS BORN.
THE TREES, GRASS, BUGS, ANIMALS ...
...IS SHIMMERING.
...ALL ARE SPARKLING ...
... SPARKLING ...
I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED SUCH A GLORIOUS THING...
THE ENTIRE WORLD...

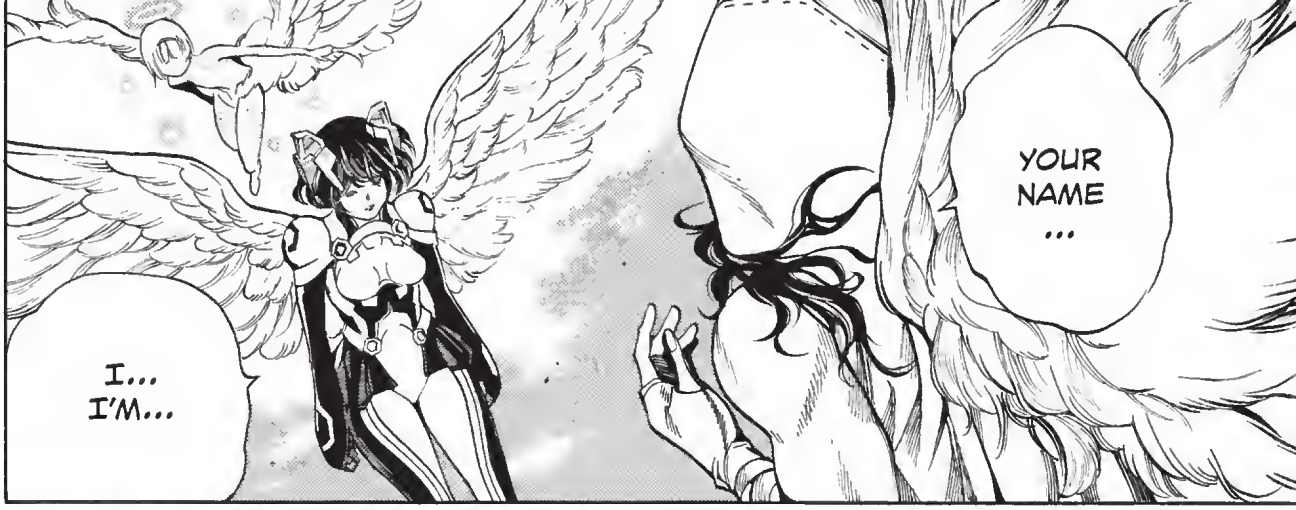
PWIP
PWIP
SHE'S LURING ME ONWARD!
SHE'S INVITING ME...!
SHHF
I... I WANT TO SEE HER UP CLOSE... I WANT TO SPEAK TO HER...
I WANT TO GO WHERE SHE IS.
...THESE FEELINGS TO HER!!
I WANT TO EXPLAIN...

...
!
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU DOING, HAJIME?
KCHAK
I...
I NEED TO GO... TO THE BATHROOM... SO... CAN YOU COME... AND STAND GUARD IN... MY PLACE ...?
G-G-G-G-G-G


I... I DON'T WANT YOU TO HEAR THE SOUNDS ...
I-I MEAN, IT WOULD BE RUDE TO YOU ...
SO I WILL LEAVE MY RADIO HERE ...
TUNK
...
GO AND GET IT OVER WITH.
NOBODY'S WATCHING YOU NOW.
B-BUT I WOULD PREFER... TO DO IT IN A PLACE... WHERE YOUR CAMERAS C-CAN'T SEE. I M-MAY BE YOUR SERVANT, B-BUT I STILL HAVE M-MY PRIDE...

SHWIP
BE BACK AT ONCE.
...
MIRROR HOUSE

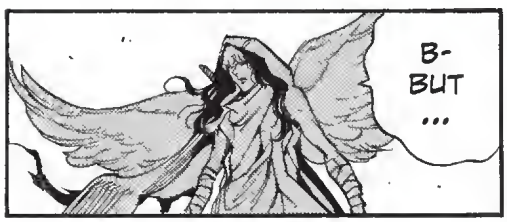
FWUP
I'M...I'M... HAJIME... SOKOTANI...
I'VE LOVED YOU... F-FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW YOU...
WH... WHAT IS YOUR NAME...?
I... I WANT TO KNOW YOU BETTER...


I...
I'M...
YOUR
NAME
...

PLEASE LET THOSE PEOPLE OUT OF THE MIRROR HOUSE!
PLEASE!
MIRROR HOUSE

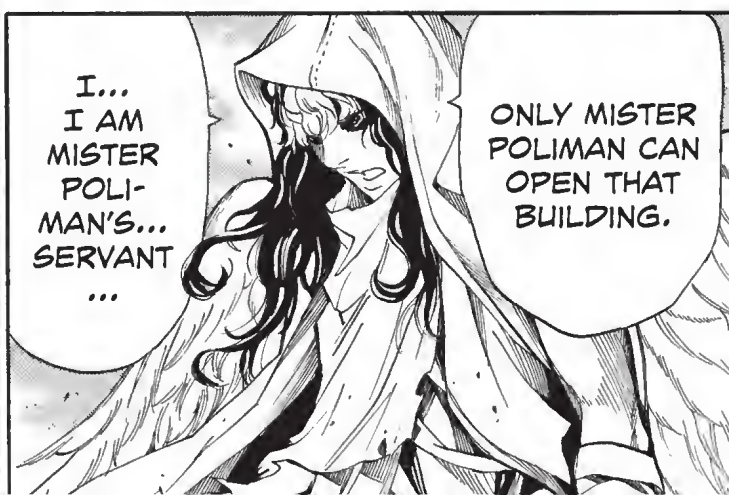
YOU CAN DO IT, SAKI.

...


B-
BUT
...

!

HIS...
HIS
SERVANT
...


I...
I AM
MISTER
POLI-
MAN'S...
SERVANT
...
ONLY MISTER POLIMAN CAN OPEN THAT BUILDING.

PLEASE, I WANT YOU TO LET THEM OUT...
THEY'RE PEOPLE WHO ARE TRULY PRECIOUS TO ME...
CHK
I... I...
I WOULD DO...
...A-A-ANYTHING FOR YOU.
SHING
IF IT WOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY...
PRE-CIOUS ...
PRE... SHUS ...?

I'LL DO ANY-THING !!
FWUSHHH
MIRROR HOUSE
GUSHED
MIRROR HOUSE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, HAJIME ?!

I'M... SAVING S-SOME P-PRECIOUS PEOPLE FROM THIS TRAP... W-WITH THE WOMAN I LOVE!!
I... I'M...
KNIIIIII
A RED ARROW?!
THE WOMAN YOU LOVE?!

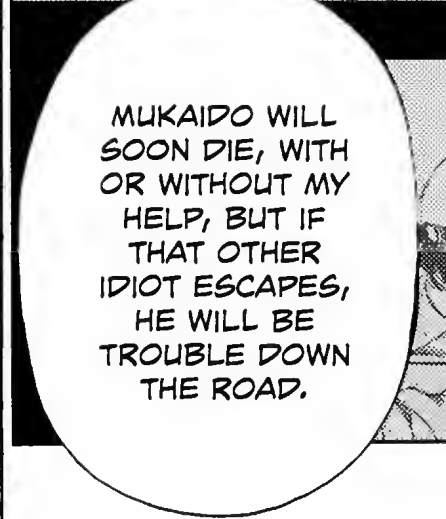
ALL RIGHT!
YES! IT WORKED!
...

!
GRAKK
WHAK
KLANG
DID YOU HEAR THAT, MR. MUKAIDO?!
YEAH!
KNIIIIIII
DON'T SLOW DOWN YET!
BUT IT COULD BE SOME KIND OF TRAP!
STOP IT, HAJIME!
IT'S NOT A TRAP! A BEAUTIFUL WARRIOR DRESSED IN YELLOW HAS SWOOPED IN ON WINGS TO HELP!
WHAK
KCHING
KRAKK
SHE USED A RED ARROW ON THE MAN!
REVEL?!

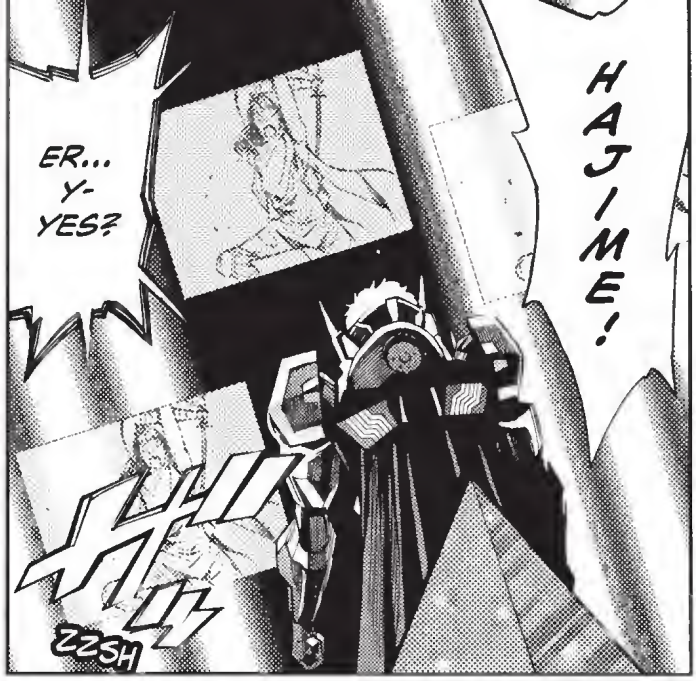
REVEL, A SECOND RANK...
HE LIKELY ASCENDED TO FIRST RANK OR BETTER SO THAT SHE COULD HAVE WINGS.
SO, THERE WERE OTHERS.
FWAP

WHAT A PAIN IN THE ASS...

THERE ARE PLENTY OF WAYS TO DESTROY THE MIRROR HOUSE FROM THE OUTSIDE.
...
KLAK
LANG


MUKAIDO WILL SOON DIE, WITH OR WITHOUT MY HELP, BUT IF THAT OTHER IDIOT ESCAPES, HE WILL BE TROUBLE DOWN THE ROAD.

HE'S SO COOL...
UNLIKE ME... HE'S SO FULL OF CONFI-DENCE...
I... I WISH I COULD BE LIKE HIM...
SH-SHOW THEM ALL, MISTER
SERVANT ...


HAJIME!
ER... Y-YES?
ZZSH

WEREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE MY SERVANT?

!

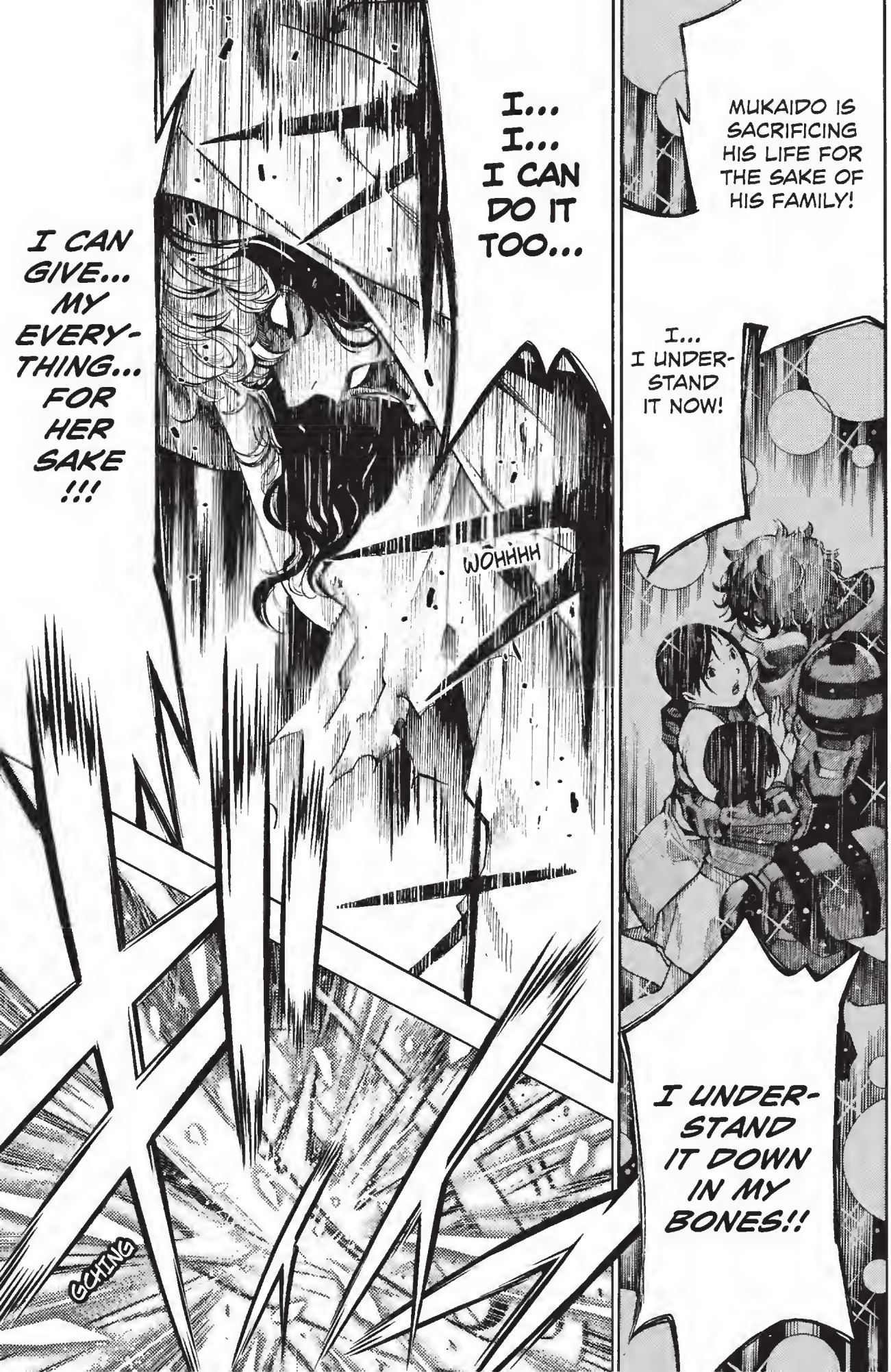
I W-WISHED I'D NEVER BEEN B-BORN ...
I... H-HATED MY PARENTS FOR MAKING ME UGLY... HATED M-MYSELF FOR BEING UGLY...
B-B... BEFORE I WAS A GOD CANDIDATE... I WAS UNLOVED AND UNLOVING.

TECHNI-CALLY...
...I WAS.

BUT ...

TH-THAT YOU WOULD BURN DOWN THE W-WORLD ...
THEN, WHEN I M-MET YOU, I BELIEVED YOU WOULD M-MAKE MY WISH COME TRUE...

...THE MEANING OF LIFE...
THE CAT-EARED GIRL TAUGHT ME...
SHE HELPED ME REALIZE ...


MUKAIDO IS SACRIFICING HIS LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF HIS FAMILY!
I... I... I CAN DO IT TOO...
I CAN GIVE... MY EVERY-THING... FOR HER SAKE !!!
WŌHHHH
I... I UNDER-STAND IT NOW!
I UNDER-STAND IT DOWN IN MY BONES!!
GCHING

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WAS STUPID ENOUGH TO GET SHOT!
THERE ISN'T A HUMAN BEING ALIVE WHO WOULD FALL IN LOVE WITH A KATANA-SWINGING LUNATIC WITH OBVIOUS PLASTIC SURGERY!!
TH-THANKS TO THE RED ARROW ...
GRAK
GAKK
GCHING
SHNIK
TH-THANKS TO THE RED ARROW...
KRAK
GAK
...I'VE COME TO UNDER-STAND... SOMETHING WONDER-FUL!
YOU OBLIVI-OUS CLOWN! YOU LET THE RED ARROW CONTROL YOU!!

THE WORDS OF A PERSON WHO DOES NOT TREASURE LIFE HAVE N-N-NO EFFECT ON ME!!
I'M COMING TO KILL YOU NOW! YOU AND THE GIRL!

LET'S GO, MEY-ZA!
MOON
RIGHT AWAY.
YAY, WE GET TO WORK WITH THE BOSS!
ONE, TWO ...
OOH, THREE OF US?
I'M GETTING THE SHIVERS.
GRAKS
!
SHWIP
I GOT THROUGH ...
!
WHAT'S THAT ...?
KWIII

SKRAAAK
WARNING
DANGER, DO NOT ENTER
PLIP
PLIK
GRK...
FSHHH...
KBOOM
HSSSSS
WHOOPS...
MESSED UP THE LANDING THERE.
KOHHH
KOHHH
NO, YOU JUST WANTED TO LOOK COOL AND STAND OUT.
SHWIP

LET'S USE THIS TO BLOW UP THE WHOLE HOUSE, BOSS!
CLICK
PSST
KWIIII
NOPE, WON'T WORK.
カチャ
CHAK
CHAK
カチャ
IF I COULD PUT POISON ON THIS, IT'D BECOME A PROPER WHITE ARROW.
ALAS... MORE ROOM FOR EXPERIMEN-TATION, I SUPPOSE.
THEY CAN FLY AWAY FROM DANGER, LIKE AT THE TOWER. BETTER TO INJECT GAS INSIDE.
SHWIP

WOOO
NICE TO MEET YOU, CAT-EARS.
FOUR OF THEM...!
KWING!

!
FWOOSH
THAT'S VERY BRAVE AND COOL OF YOU, BUT IT'S FOUR-ON-TWO.
BADUMP
I... I KNOW THOSE AREN'T THE REAL ODDS!
D-DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A FOOL...
BADUMP
TH-THAT MEANS... YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I N-NEED TO WORRY ABOUT, POLIMAN.
ONLY A WHITE ARROW WILL LAND NOW.
I- I'VE ALREADY GOT AN ARROW OF LOVE STUCK IN ME.

BUT...
THIS IS BAD, SAKI. WE SHOULD ESCAPE NOW, WHILE HE'S CONFRONTING THEM...
!
YES! WE CAN GET OUT THAT WAY!
SHWIM
RIGHT!
HIS KATANA!
IT CRACKED THROUGH!
LOOK, MR. MUKAIDO!
!

HOPE IT'S ENOUGH!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
KRUNCH
THAT'S IT!!
CHK
THREE BULLETS LEFT.

KSHAAA!
KAKEHASHI!!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MR. MUKAIDO?!
SHWAP
FWIP
HMPH!
CHKK
YEAH!

SAKI!
KAKE-HASHI!
I HAVE WINGS NOW...
THANKS!
DOOM

HUFF!
HUFF!
HUFF!
FOUR-ON-FOUR...
HOW ABOUT IT? WHY DON'T WE SQUARE OFF AND SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL IN A TEAM BATTLE?

HAJIME KNOWS MY IDENTITY.
I OUGHT TO JUST KILL THEM ALL RIGHT HERE, BUT...

...
...THAT METROPOLIMAN ONLY FIGHTS WHEN HE HAS A CLEAR ADVANTAGE!
AS THE NEWLY MADE ANGEL OF EMOTION WHO CAN READ THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS, I CAN TELL YOU...
IT'S POINTLESS, NANATO MUKAIDO.

REVEL'S TRYING TO PROVOKE THEM INTO FIGHTING, BUT THAT WILL BACKFIRE...
THEY HAVE A FULL COMPLEMENT OF ANGELS. THAT PUTS ME AT THE DISADVANTAGE.
IT MAKES IT EVEN LESS LIKELY THAT THE COWARDLY METROPOLIMAN WILL FIGHT US. WE SHOULD REGROUP AND LOOK FOR ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.
I CAN TELL THAT IT'S REALLY MR. MUKAIDO'S EMOTIONS HE'S FOCUSING ON RIGHT NOW.
REVEL, ANGEL OF EMOTION... HE'LL KNOW SAKI'S FEELINGS BECAUSE HE'S ALWAYS AROUND HER, BUT HE CAN'T KNOW WHAT METROPOLIMAN'S THINKING...

TO BE CONTINUED...

PLATINVM END

STORY BY **TSUGUMI OHBA**

TAKESHI OBATA

The other day I drank Japanese sake the right way
for the first time and found out it's very good.

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